

CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1. 1. A method of facilitating person-to-person commerce over the Internet, the method comprising the steps of:
 3. harvesting images from a plurality of sites based upon user-supplied information,
 4. the user-supplied information including descriptions of items for sale and
 5. locations from which images to be associated with the items can be
 6. retrieved,
 7. creating thumbnail images corresponding to the harvested images; and
 8. aggregating the thumbnail images onto a web page for presentation at a remote site.
1. 2. The method of claim 1, wherein the step of creating thumbnail images corresponding to the harvested images comprises the steps of:
 3. for each harvested image
 4. decompressing the harvested image from a source format to a decompressed
 5. image format;
 6. converting the decompressed image format to a thumbnail image format; and
 7. compressing the thumbnail image format into an output format.
1. 3. The method of claim 2, wherein the source format comprises one of the following image formats: TIFF, JPEG, AVI, JFIF, PNG, BMP, PBM, PGM, PPM, PSD, XBM, XPM, WPG, PICT.
1. 4. The method of claim 2, wherein the output format comprises one of the following image formats: TIFF, JPEG, AVI, JFIF, PNG, BMP, PBM, PGM, PPM, PSD, XBM, XPM, WPG, PICT.

1 5. The method of claim 1, wherein the locations comprise Uniform Resource Locators
2 (URLs), and wherein the step of harvesting images from a plurality of sites based
3 upon user-supplied information comprises the step of downloading the images from
4 the plurality of sites specified by the URLs.

3 storing at a local site a first thumbnail image associated with a first item for sale, the
4 first thumbnail image created based on a first image at a first remote site;
5 storing at the local site a second thumbnail image associated with a second item for
6 sale, the second thumbnail image created based upon a second image at a
7 second remote site; and
8 combining the first and second thumbnail images onto a web page for presentation
9 at a third remote site.

1 7. The method of claim 6, further comprising the step of harvesting the first and
2 second images from the first and second remote sites, respectively, based upon
3 user-supplied information including Uniform Resource Locators (URLs) from
4 which the first and second images can be retrieved.

1 8. The method of claim 7, further comprising the step of scaling the first and second
2 images to fit within a predetermined space.

4 retrieving a thumbnail image of the plurality of thumbnail images from the database
5 by indexing into the virtual address space at a location defined by the first
6 address plus an offset corresponding to the thumbnail image.

1 10. The method of claim 9, wherein the step of loading a database comprising a
2 plurality of thumbnail images completely into a virtual address space of a process
3 starting at a first address comprises opening the database as a memory mapped file.

1 11. A method of generating HyperText Markup Language (HTML), the method
2 comprising the steps of:
3 accessing a data store having data for display, the data including information
4 associated with an item including an item number; and
5 generating HTML including a reference to an image associated with the item, the
6 reference based upon the item number and an image format associated with
7 the image.

1 12. The method of claim 11, wherein the reference comprises an inline image tag, and
2 wherein the step of generating HyperText Markup Language (HTML) including a
3 reference to an image associated with the item comprises specifying the SRC
4 attribute of the inline image tag in the form <path><item number>.<image
5 extension>, where <image extension> comprises a three or four character extension
6 corresponding to the image format.

1 13. The method of claim 11, wherein the reference is in a form other than a query.

1 14. The method of claim 11, wherein the image is stored in a database that is accessed
2 as a memory mapped file.

1 15. A method of displaying items, the method comprising the steps of:
2 storing in a database a first thumbnail image associated with a first item for sale, the
3 first thumbnail image created based on a first user-specified image at a first
4 remote site;
5 storing in the database a second thumbnail image associated with a second item for
6 sale, the second thumbnail image created based upon a second user-
7 specified image at a second remote site; and
8 responsive to a query, combining the first and second thumbnail images onto a web
9 page for presentation at a client from which the query originated.

1 16. A method of displaying items in a person-to-person online trading environment,
2 the method comprising the steps of:
3 creating a first thumbnail image associated with a first item for sale, the first
4 thumbnail image based on a first image at a first remote site;
5 creating a second thumbnail image associated with a second item for sale, the
6 second thumbnail image based on a second image at a second remote site;
7 and
8 responsive to a user query, combining the first and second thumbnail images onto a
9 web page for presentation at a client from which the user query originated.

1 17. The method of claim 16, further comprising the step of updating the first thumbnail
2 image.

1 18. In an online commerce environment, a method of allowing a user to preview a
2 plurality of items for sale, the method comprising the steps of:
3 receiving a query; and

4 causing a plurality of thumbnail images corresponding to items that satisfy the user
5 query to be displayed, each of the thumbnail images created based upon a
6 user-specified image.

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A2

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